



The Family Liaison Office

Direct Communication Project

Employment:

Highest Previous Rate (HPR) and Superior Qualifications Rate (SQR)

How and When to Ask for HPR or SQR

These two government rates can play an important role in establishing a salary level when applying for a federal government position. Family Members may want to learn more about the difference between the two rates and how to ask for HPR or SQR when they are offered a position.

- **Highest Previous Rate (HPR)**

If you have worked in a government Civil Service or FMA position (for more than 90 days) and have established a grade and step salary level, you are eligible to be appointed at your Highest Previous Rate. This means that the agency may authorize a rate of pay above the initial step in the position grade to match approximately the employee's previous pay level. For example, if you apply for a position, which is a GS-06, and you have previously worked as a GS-07, you would be eligible to be appointed at a GS-06, step 4. However, it is discretionary on the part of the agency and not an employee right. You should be aware that when applying for a position at an embassy or consulate overseas, post may have a policy limiting the number of steps they will grant because of budgetary restrictions. It is always best to check with post to determine the current policy.

It is important to remember to ask for this at the time when you are offered a position. It is not something you would discuss earlier during an interview, but only when you actually receive the job offer. The HR officer may not always remember to discuss this or apply this automatically, so it is good to be informed. Additionally, it is your responsibility to provide post the Personnel Action (SF-50) documenting your appointment at the higher rate.

- **Superior Qualifications Rate (SQR)**

When applying for a government CS or FMA position, you can also ask for a Superior Qualifications Rate consideration. This is a request to the hiring agency to consider your private sector work skills and experience to obtain a higher step level in the grade of the government position. The 'outside' skills

and experience must be relevant to the requirements of this government position.

SQR must be requested at the time of hiring; at the moment you receive the job offer. It cannot be granted retroactively and this is important for the candidate to remember. SQR can be considered at every new appointment. If an employee has not requested it for one appointment, the employee can ask for consideration for subsequent appointments. Again, like HPR, SQR is not an entitlement.

Applicants should be advised that only one of the two rates can be considered and that HPR and SQR cannot be applied concurrently.

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